

H. Stein

12/13/51

~~CONFIDENTIAL NOT FOR RELEASE~~

SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE U. S. SECURITY PROGRAM

The purpose of this memorandum is to express some of the doubts about the U.S. security program that trouble an outside observer. "Doubt" is the correct word for what is being expressed. There is not enough evidence to support an indictment. Possibly the security program is being run as well as it could be. But there are enough scraps of evidence to support doubts. These doubts should be gotten out into the open, so that they may be laid to rest if they are groundless and so that corrective measures may be taken if necessary.

Doubts about the security program exist on two scores:

1. Are we trying to do the right things -- is there a general plan for promotion of U. S. National interests realistically attuned to the current world situation?

2. Are we carrying out the plan effectively, on schedule and economically?

The first question, about the adequacy of planning, has at least three parts:

1. Is there at the top policy levels of government an appraisal of the world situation which is based on the best available information, which is continuously reviewed, and which is agreed to by the responsible officials as the most reasonable basis for action? This appraisal would include a definition of U. S. national interests, an estimate of the capacity and interest of the Russians to endanger these interests and an evaluation of the strength and weakness of other countries as factors in U.S. security.

2. Is there a general plan for promoting U. S. interest in the light of this agreed estimate of the world situation. The plan would include an assignment of missions or objectives to the various instruments of U.S. policy -- U.S. military strength, economic aid, military aid, diplomacy and propaganda. It would also include a decision as to the amount of resources to be devoted to each instrument.

DEC 19 1951  
AP/2 R30

3. Is there a program for building up U.S. military strength which is adapted to the requirements of the mission assigned to military forces in the general plan, and which combines the main categories of military strength in an effective and economical way for the performance of that mission?

A number of pieces of evidence raise doubts that the answers to these questions are all affirmative:

1. Important international developments in the past eighteen months have apparently been unanticipated and unprepared for by the U.S. government and therefore became "crises". Among these developments were the invasion of South Korea, the intervention of the Chinese Communists, the Western European economic difficulties, the Iran crisis and the Suez crisis. Each of these events might have been foreseen by someone in the Government, but from the standpoint of the Administration's overall outlook and plan they seem to have been surprises.

2. Although the general outlines of official appraisal of the threat to American security and of an official policy to deal with it have emerged, there is little evidence that either the appraisal or the policy has been formulated in the detailed and dated terms that are necessary to support a program of action. Of course, the government would not publish a detailed and dated analysis if it had one. But it is extremely unlikely that its existence could be kept a secret, or that some coloration of it would not appear in official statements.

3. The recent discussion of the military schedules provoked by the Lyndon Johnson Committee's criticism of the production performance has disturbing implications. Reply to the Johnson Committee's criticism has largely taken the form of statements that failure to meet the schedules is not serious because the schedules did not represent either essential requirements or feasible goals. While this may to some degree excuse the production performance it is a serious indictment of the planning. Realistic schedules are the heart of integrated planning. A set of unrealistic schedules can throw a number of essential relationships seriously out of balance:

The relation between military strength and other security policies,

The relation between U.S. military production and the plans of our allies,

The relations among weapons of different kinds,

The relations between military production and the planned flow of materials and construction of facilities,

The relation between military production and economic stabilization policies.

4. The repeated practice of dividing the military budget in equal thirds among Army, Air and Navy has created a suspicion that the allocation of resources among major categories of military strength reflects inter-service bargaining rather than rational analysis.

5. Current evidence about the planning of our security policies is interpreted against the background of a historical record which shows that we have not handled similar problems well in the past. While the historical record is not conclusive for the present and the future, at least it does not create an initial presumption that we know how to deal with vital security matters effectively.

Doubts about the planning of the security program based on such evidence do not imply any belief on the part of the outside observer that he knows better than the responsible officials. To question the adequacy of the official appraisal and plan does not imply that one has a better appraisal and plan. The point is simply lack of evidence of the kind of systematic, thorough, comprehensive, objective process that one would expect to yield good results in a problem so complex as the promotion of U.S. national interests. So far as this kind of doubt goes, U.S. policy could be wrong in any direction. For example, the U.S. military program might be too big or too small. But the evidence does not inspire confidence that it is just right.

It is true that many people, especially businessmen, have proceeded from general lack of confidence in U.S. security planning to the position that the plans are wrong in one specific direction -- namely that the military program is too big. Again this

does not imply a superior independent judgment. People who say that the program is too big would not usually maintain that on the basis of independent analysis they have come to the conclusion that the armed forces should consist of 3 million men and 107 air wings rather than 3.6 million and 143.

The more common basis for mistrust is the feeling that the process by which decisions are now being made contains a bias in favor of excessive military expenditures. In a period of security crisis the military bias is likely to have its way unless there is an overall, civilian-determined, national policy in which the military is assigned a definite mission and military procurement is held to the needs of carrying out that mission. Since the controls needed to offset the military bias for more strength are not in evidence, it is reasonable to suspect the operation of a military bias.

This may not be the whole story. There are other biases in the picture -- biases against high taxes, against deficits, against "dislocation" of the civilian economy. The military have not had their way completely. We cannot tell a priori whether the checks upon the military appetite have gone too far or not far enough, but it would be amazing if the results of a compromise between military bias and "economy" bias came out just right.

In addition to doubt about the adequacy of the planning there has been growing doubts, especially in recent months, about the effectiveness with which plans are being carried out. This is mainly a question about whether we are carrying out the military build up on schedule and economically. However, there is also question about the effectiveness with which other parts of the program -- such as the Point IV program and the psychological warfare program -- are being executed.

With respect to the execution of the military program, the main questions are these:

1. Have the general military strength requirements been translated into schedules for the procurement of specific equipment that would meet the military performance requirements in the most economical way -- that is, with least drain upon the nation's resources?

2. Have the procurement schedules been translated into firm contracts and vigorous steps been taken to assure performance under the contracts?

3. Have the economic mobilization agencies (ODM, OPA, etc.) been provided with military procurement schedules running a reasonable period into the future, and translated into requirements for materials, facilities and components, so that the mobilization agencies could assure the adequate availability of productive resources to meet the schedules?

There are many reasons for doubts about the execution of the military program.

1. The Lyndon Johnson Committee and others in some position to know have criticized failure to meet schedules, and Administration replies to this criticism have not been entirely convincing. The lag in deliveries of military supplies to Western Europe and the shortage of modern fighter planes in Korea look like reflections of inadequate production here.

2. Many manufacturers working on military contracts report that the military specifications call for excessive use of particularly scarce materials and involve excessive delay and expense in production.

3. Congressional committees and others report numerous instances of wasteful use of manpower and supplies by the military.

4. Persons involved in or familiar with the economic policy aspects of rearmament complain that the military have provided no schedule of their requirements adequate to serve as a basis for economic planning. This is apparently reflected in the way production officials blow hot and cold about the outlook for civilian shortages.

As noted at the outset, it is possible that these doubts are all unjustified. If this is the case there has been a serious failure of communication between the Administration and the public. But even though we are uncertain whether the criticisms are justified it is worthwhile speculating about the factors that might cause defects in the security program -- either in the planning or in the execution. This will cast some light on the plausibility of the criticisms and on the nature of possible corrections.

A list of the factors that might be alleged to cause deficiencies in the U.S. security program includes:

1. Attitudes of the American public and Congress

- a) Emotionalism and idealism - the need to be highly excited before strenuous measures will be undertaken.
- b) Instability - because the excitement cannot last even though the underlying causes of insecurity persist
- c) Excessive faith in military strength as compared with other instruments of national policy
- d) Alleged excessive preference for butter over guns
- e) Irresponsible political use of national security issues.

2. Operations of National Security Council

- a) Insufficiently comprehensive and long-run view
- b) Unwillingness of members to share authority with others
- c) Inadequacy of staff work - senior staff, assigned from departments, has too little time for Council activities
- d) Ineffectiveness of Presidential leadership.

3. Joint Chiefs of Staff

- a) Incomplete acceptance of limited role of military strength in promoting U.S. security.
- b) Failure to develop techniques and attitudes that lead to objective solution of inter-service problems rather than merely peaceful compromise among unresolved differences.

4. Department of Defense generally

- a) Lack of consciousness, at operating levels, of limits to availability of money and materials that would serve as incentive to economy.
- b) Failure to provide close review of operations by top level authority that might serve as substitute for incentives to economy.

c) Failure to relate detailed operations to general military plan in a way that would control the scale and timing of military procurement.

d) Lack of communication between procurement branches and mobilization agencies, including Munitions Board.

5. Office of Defense Mobilization

a) Excessively hands-off attitude towards military services

b) Excessive emphasis on trouble-shooting as contrasted to planning.

6. DPA - NPA

a) Attempt to control materials flow in too much detail

b) Excessive tenderness towards civilian economy — unwillingness to create civilian vacuum into which military business might flow.